

THE WIDOWED  
FLAMEN

Evidence of Aulus Gellius as to the marriage of the Roman gods. Further, the learned Roman antiquary Aulus Gellius quotes from "the books of the priests of the Roman people" (the highest possible authority on the subject) and from "many ancient speeches a list of old Roman deities, in which there seem to be at least five pairs of males and females.<sup>1</sup> More than that he proves conclusively by quotations from Plautus, the annalist Cn. Gellius, and Licinius Imbrex that these old writers certainly regarded one at least of the pairs (Mars and Nerio) as husband and wife;<sup>2</sup> and we have good ancient evidence for viewing in the same light three others of the pairs. Thus the old annalist and antiquarian L. Cincius Alimentus, who fought against Hannibal and was captured by him, affirmed in his work on the Roman calendar that Maia was the wife of Vulcan;<sup>3</sup> and as there was a Flamen of Vulcan, who sacrificed to Maia on May Day,<sup>4</sup> it is reasonable to suppose that he was assisted in the ceremony by a Flaminica, his wife, just as on my hypothesis the Flamen Dialis was assisted by his wife the Flaminica. Another old Roman historian, L. Calpurnius Piso, who wrote in the second century B.C., said that the name of Vulcan's wife was not Maia but

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was not a god of death and the dead; he was simply a personified oath (op/os; see Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 804 "O/KOJ> 7€(i/6,ae^oy, TOP "Epts re^e TT?}//," *eiriopKois*), an abstract idea which makes no figure in Greek mythology and religion. That such a rare and thin Greek abstraction should through a gross misunderstanding be transformed into a highly popular Roman god of death, who not only passed muster with the people but was admitted by the pontiffs themselves to the national pantheon and honoured by them with a solemn ritual, is in the last degree improbable.

<sup>1</sup> Aulus Gellius, xiii. 23 (22), I *sg.*<sup>9</sup> *Conprecationes deum immortalium^ qttae ritit, Romano fiimt^ expositae simt in libris sacerdotitm populi JRomani et in plerisque antiquis orationibis. In his scribtum est: Lit*

am *Satitmi*,  
*Salaciam* *Ncptuni*,  
*Horam* *Quiring*  
*Virites* *Quiring*  
*Maia* *Vokani*<sup>^</sup>  
*Pleriem* *Junonis*<sup>^</sup>  
*Moles Martis Nerie-*  
*ncmque Martis*" As  
to this list see  
Mr. W. Warde Fowler,  
*Roman. Festi-*  
*tivals of the Period of*  
*the Republic*  
(London, 1899), pp.  
60-62 ; ztf., *The*  
*Religious Experience*  
*of the Roman*  
*People* (London,  
1911), pp. 150<sup>^</sup>,  
481 sqq. He holds (p.  
485) that the  
feminine names  
*Salacia*, etc., do not

designate goddesses,  
the wives of the  
gods, but that they  
"indicate functions  
or attributes of the  
male deity to whom  
they are attached."

- Aulus Gellius,  
xiii. 23 (22), n-  
16.

<sup>3</sup> Macrobius,  
*Saturn*, i. 12.  
18,

"*Cingins mensem* [I]  
*laiiini*] *nominatum*  
*putat a Maia.*)

*quam Vukani*  
*dicit*

*nxoreni*)

*argumentoqne*

*ittitur quod*

*flamen Vukanalis*

*KaUndis Mails*

*huic dcae rem divinam*

*facit: sed Piso*

*uxorem*

*VulcaniMajestam*<sup>^</sup>*no*

*n* *Maia*,

*didt vocari*" The

work of Cincius

(Cingius) is

mentioned by

Macrobius

in the same chapter

(§ 12<sub>3</sub> " *Civghts*

*in eo libro quern de*

*fastis reliquit*").

As to the life and

writings of this old

annalist and antiquary

see M. Schanz,

*Geschichte dcr*

*romischen Litteratur?*

i. (Munich, 1898),

p. 128; G.

Wissowa, Miinzer, and

Cichorius, s.v.

"Cincius," in Pauly-

Wissowa's *Real-*

*encyclopdie der*

*dassischen Altertums-*

*wissemchaft*, iii. 2555

sqq. All these

writers distinguish

the old annalist

from the antiquary,

whom they take to

have been a later

writer of the same

name. But the

distinction appears

to

be purely arbitrary

and destitute of any

ancient authority.

<sup>4</sup> Macrobius,

*Saturn*, i. 12.

18.

See the preceding

note.